

LOCALITY, DATE, AND NAME WITH OBSERVATIONS

To the Editor, Journal of Mammalogy:

Your Journal is certainly a godsend in affording us restless ones a place to post our views and to learn those of others. You have been generous to me in giving me so much space for my observations, will you allow me a few lines to state some grievances, or at least to point out some wrong methods that have caused a great deal of unnecessary annoyance and loss.

1st. Observations given without place or date. I have before me a note on three Mink by a leading naturalist, but no date. If it was spring, it was highly significant—if it was autumn, it meant nothing.

2nd. Dating with numbers for months. Some use the logical sequence—day, month, year. Some, alas! including our Post Office officials use it "month, day, year." I have before me a specimen from a leading museum with the field label on it marked 8/4/98 and the museum label 4/8/98. Which is it? Can't we use Roman numerals for the month, or the established abbreviations, and end such muddles?

3rd. I have before me an adventure with a Lynx, by "Mr." Mackenzie of Labrador. If it was Peter Mackenzie, it is valuable. If any of the 75 other Mackenzies it is interesting, but doubtful. If by Nicodemus or Ananias Mackenzie, it is waste paper. I would never use "Mr." in such connection. It generally means that the recorder did not think it worth following up. Of course, "Dr." or "Miss" or "Mrs." are all right for they have identification force, but not "Mr."

If Sir John Richardson had talked of "Thomas Hutchins" instead of "Mr. Hutchins," it would have saved a world of trouble and prevented the injustice that robbed Hutchins of the credit of his great work.

4th. Citation, without mention of source. I have before me some observations on the jump of a Mexican Squirrel, quoted, without mention of source, by a modern writer. If the source was one well known Mexican traveller it is of the highest value, if by another that I have in mind, it should be scrapped.

Yours sincerely,

Ernest Thompson Seton.

Greenwich, Conn.,
20 December, 1919.